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We Claim:

- 1. A method of developing and communicating information regarding the automotive industry that provides a market based system for sustaining the environment by using the Internet, said method comprising the steps of:
- a) identifying cars and light-trucks
 as a class of vehicles manufactured by the

 10 automotive industry from which consumers may
 choose a vehicle for purchase and for which
 consumers may desire to have environmental
 performance information to consider as a factor in
 selecting a vehicle for purchase,
 - for evaluating the individual vehicles of said class of vehicles in respect to the environmental performance of each individual vehicle, said company being independent of the members of the automotive industry.
 - c) said e-commerce company developing an objective environmental performance rating system based upon a rating algorithm driven by quality assured data,

obtaining said data over the d) Internet from government sources and private sector sources,

- processing/the data into ratings in accordance with said algorithm to identify the 5 vehicles which are the most environmentally sensitive,
 - presenting physical awards in f) recognition of the most environmentally sensitive vehicles to the manufacturers of those vehicles,
 - g) said e-commerce company establishing an Internet web site to communicate to consumers and/other stake-holders the rating system and the #dentification of vehicles with the highest ratings, the award winning vehicles,
- said e-commerce company h) facilitating the promotion of the results of said environmental performance evaluation in accordance with said ratings by companies winning the awards 20 and by e-commerce product information/buying services td communicate to consumers and other stake-holders, via the Internet and other media, identification of the vehicles which are the most environmentally sensitive

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- i) whereby consumers desiring to help sustain the environment are enabled to select and buy a vehicle that is among the top environmentally sensitive vehicles of the

 5 available vehicles and companies offering such vehicles achieve increased sales and are encouraged thereby to develop and sell new vehicles that are more environmentally sensitive,
- j) and whereby the environment is

 improved because more environmentally sensitive

 vehicles are purchased and developed instead of

 less environmentally sensitive vehicles, thereby

 establishing a market-driven, as opposed to

 government regulated, approach to sustaining the

 environment.

identifying to consumers via the Internet, in a consumer friendly, industry compatible and timely manner said award-winning vehicles wherein said method includes the steps of:

k) identifying, by brand name and model, the different vehicles offered for sale by different companies in the automotive industry

production of the state of the

such identification being the same as that used in advertising by the manufacturers and retailers,

- 1) producing said ratings in timed
 relationships with the beginning of the model year
 of the industry,
- m) establishing and implementing communication plans for identifying the top environmental performers to consumers for the model year whereby consumers will be enabled to sustain the environment by purchasing the identified vehicles and are benefited by an improved environment and benefited by improved vehicle operating costs.

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3. A method as defined by Claim 1 for helping a vehicle manufacturer to increase it's sales of vehicles which are among the best in environmental performance ratings, wherein said method includes the steps of:

- 20 n) / establishing a national recognition for said ratings and said physical awards,
 - o) facilitating the use by the vehicle manufacturer of the rating system and the use of

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the awards in its advertising and other promotional activity,

marketplace creditability for the environmental

performance of its vehicles and gains image
enhancement and whereby it can differentiate its
products on the basis of environmental performance
and third-party validation of its award-winning
models.

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4. A method as defined by claim 1 for decreasing the impact of the automotive industry on the environment by enabling consumers to select for purchase those vehicles that have been identified as among the best in environmental performance, wherein said method includes the esteps of :

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q) developing and implementing a communication plan that gains recognition and acceptance for the rating system,

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r) facilitating the advertisement and the identification of the top-rated vehicles to induce consumers to buy the top-rated vehicles,

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- whereby the impact of yehicles on the environment will be decreased.
- A method as defined by claim 1 for 5. helping automotive e-commerce businesses 5 (including e-commerce product information services and e-commerce buying services) increase the number of visitors to their web sites,

said e-commerce company

- 10 establishing links between its web site and the web sites of the aut/omotive e-commerce businesses to permit visitors/to the web sites of the automotive e-commerce businesses to obtain independent verification of ratings and awards,
- u) whereby the automotive e-commerce businesses will enjoy a better public image for providing environmental performance data and whereby consumer-usable environmental information will farorably differentiate the automotive e-20 commetce businesses and provide increased revenue for them.
 - A method of developing and communicating information regarding an Andustry that provides a

market-based system for sustaining the environment by using the Internet, said method comprising the steps of:

- a) selecting an industry from a group

 5 of industries having needs for improved
 environmental communications and marketing for its
 products,
- b) identifying a class of products

 manufactured by the selected industry from which

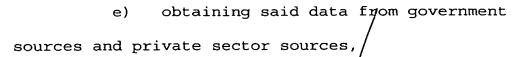
 10 consumers may choose a product for purchase and for

 which consumers may desire to have environmental

 performance information to consider as a factor in

 selecting a product for purchase,
- c) establishing a new e-commerce

 15 company for evaluating the individual products of said class of products in respect to the environmental performance of each individual product, said company being independent of the members of the selected industry.
- d) said e-commerce company developing an objective environmental performance rating system of the products based upon a rating algorithm driven by quality assured data,



- f) processing the data/into ratings in accordance with said algorithm to/identify the products which are the most environmentally sensitive,
- g) and presenting physical awards in recognition of the most environmentally sensitive products to the manufacturers of those products,
- 10 h) establishing web site to communicate the rating system and the top environmental performers to consumers and other stakeholders,
 - i) said e-commerce company
- 15 facilitating the promotion of the results of said environmental performance evaluation in accordance with said ratings by companies winning the awards and e-commerce product information/buying services to communicate to consumers and other stake-
- 20 holders, via the Internet and other media identification of the products which are the most environmentally gensitive.
 - j) whereby consumers, having an unfulfilled need to sustain the environment, are

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enabled to select and buy an award winning vehicle that is among the top environmentally sensitive products of the available products and companies offering such products achieve increased sales and are encouraged thereby to develop and sell new products that are more environmentally sensitive,

k) and whereby the environment is improved because more environmentally sensitive products are purchased and developed instead of less environmentally sensitive products, thereby establishing a market-driven, as opposed to government regulated, approach to improving the environment.